

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Ropp-Grabill Residence

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

4132 N. Keeler

CITY, TOWN

Chicago

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Illinois

VICINITY OF  
CODE

012

COUNTY

Cook

CODE

031

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

John P. Haas

STREET & NUMBER

4124 N. Keeler

Illinois

CITY, TOWN

Chicago

STATE

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds, Cook County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

118 N. Clark

60602

CITY, TOWN

Chicago

STATE  
Illinois

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

1. Illinois Historic Structures Survey
2. Supplementary IHSS "Potential National Register" Report

DATE

1. 1974    2. 1976

FEDERAL     STATE    COUNTY    LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Illinois Department of Conservation

CITY, TOWN

Springfield

STATE  
Illinois

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located in the Irving Park neighborhood on Chicago's northwest side, the Ropp-Grabill house stands on the west side of north Keeler avenue, set back on a large city lot. The ell-shaped, two story frame structure, covered with clapboards and set on a high brick basement, measures approximately 28 feet 4 inches by 38 feet 4 inches, excluding the porch attached to the east, with the ell projecting 4 feet beginning 14 feet from the east wall. A projecting cornice caps the building while the roof terminates in a large cupola, 5 feet 8 inches square.

The elevation of the main facade is evenly divided by two windows and the main entrance on the first floor and three windows above. The cupola is centered above this wall. On the south wall the windows are also evenly spaced, one on each floor before the ell begins and two in the ell itself. The first floor window in the middle has been opened into an elaborate oriel. In the four foot projection on the east a secondary entrance has been let. On the north wall there are pairs of windows on each floor corresponding to those in the ell on the south wall.

All of the windows on these walls except those in the oriel are two-over-two paned, set in wide frames with segmentally arched hoods. Decorated brackets support projecting eaves of the oriel, secondary entrance, the main cornice and the cupola. A dentil course runs between the brackets in the latter, while a similar course under the main overhang has been removed. The corners of the building are visually strengthened by wider boards running vertically.

Inside on the main floor, the original ballusters and heavy newell post remain as well as wide door moldings and hardwood floors. Sliding doors between the living and dining rooms retain their original graining. In the dining room an elegant wainscote decorates the four walls, while nineteenth century hardware remains on nearly every door.

The style of the house is Italianate. It is an unusual example within the state because it combines two Italianate types: the cupola over symmetrical facade, and the irregular ell-shaped plan usually found without cupola. The present appearance of the diningroom is the result of a remodelling in the Eastlake style of the 1880s which also altered the first floor plan. At this time the secondary entrance was also probably added, though great pains were taken to match the exterior decoration to the house as a whole and the nearby oriel in particular. The front porch and the living room fireplace are in the Colonial Revival style, popular after the Columbian Exposition, and were added around the turn of the century. In the eighty years since these historic remoddings the structure has remained almost unchanged. Several outbuildings, including an attached summer kitchen, were removed by subsequent owners, while steel beams now support the floor joists replacing the massive virgin tree trunks originally used in the basement.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES C. 1871

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Ropp-Grabill residence is a well-designed and admirably preserved example of the Italianate style as derived from the Renaissance Revival in England by such Eastern author/architects as A. J. Downing and Calvert Vaux and further simplified by Midwestern builders. Its subsequent changes, including remodelling the dining room in the Eastlake style and adding Colonial Revival front porch and fireplace, mirror the shifting taste of late nineteenth century architecture in America. Since 1900 it has been lovingly preserved by a series of owners mindful of its aesthetic significance. Among the later mansions, bungalows and apartment buildings erected after the neighborhood was absorbed into the city of Chicago, it stands today as the last remaining dwelling from Irving Park's first period of development to come down to us unchanged. It would be immediately recognized by a returning citizen of early Irving Park, a citizen familiar with the several dozen similar houses set on the open fields and remaining prairies of Jefferson township. But much more than merely a well-preserved structure eleven decades old, the Ropp-Grabill house is an outstanding example of its type within the city of Chicago and remains unusual within the context of the whole state. Cited for its architectural significance by the Illinois Historic Structures Survey in its Irving Park report, it was later placed on the select list of buildings deemed eligible for inclusion in the National Register on their architectural merits alone prepared for the state by Paul Sprague. Thus compared with similar Italianates still standing in the state a decade ago, the quality of its architectural design became even more apparent. Its simplicity, refined details, and harmonious historic alterations, coupled with its state of preservation, make it an outstanding example of Italianate residential architecture in Illinois.

## HISTORY

In 1869, having arranged with the Northwestern Railroad for daily service to Chicago, Charles and W. B. Race, John Wheeler and John Brown platted the town of Irving Park on open, level ground six miles northwest of Chicago. The four friends built large Italianate mansions for themselves brought their families from New York State and acted as promoters and developers of their new enclave. By 1874 sixty houses stood in the prosperous community. In the aftermath of the Chicago Fire of 1871 and the national depression which followed in 1873 growth in Irving Park halted. When the economy improved several years later, development took a different turn and the town grew less into the garden suburb envisioned by its

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet

History

Item number 8

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founders than a middleclass neighborhood rapidly becoming indistinguishable from its giant neighbor. In 1889 Irving Park was annexed to Chicago. By World War I practically every lot had been improved. After this, the greatest changes occurred in Irving Park after World War II. The Kennedy Expressway was constructed through the area in the 1950s and in the 1960s and 1970s large scaled apartment buildings began to replace the older single family dwellings.

The land on which the Ropp-Grabill house stands was awarded by government patent as part of a quarter section to Charles Walker in 1841. Twenty-eight years later it became lot 11 of the original plat of Irving Park. Unfortunately, conclusive evidence on the actual construction of the house or its original owners is missing. Available information, some of it contradictory, is summarized below.

In 1870 Irving Park developer Charles Race granted his associate John Wheeler a warranty deed on lots 9 through 16. As the house stands in the middle of these seven lots, it is possible that Wheeler himself considered building a house on the parcel and may have, in fact, erected it. Two years later Wheeler granted a warranty deed to an Isabella Tolland. However, in the mid-1870s neither Wheeler or Tolland appear to have lived in Irving Park. An early photograph of the structure is labelled "Hepp house, later Ropp house on Keeler," but this contradicts Eleanor Brown's reminiscences from the 1930s concerning the burning of the Hepp mansion. Miss Brown may be referring to a different Hepp house: Jacob Hepp, president of the Northwestern Planing Mill, lived in Irving Park from the early 1870s until 1885, while a relative, Daniel, also lived there during these years. Either of these men may have been early owners of the Ropp-Grabill house. Subsequent ownership presents no problems. By 1891 Christian Ropp, owner of C. Ropp and Sons publishing company, lived in the house. Ropp's descendents remained in the house until 1943 when it was purchased by the Grabill family. The Grabills lived there until 1977 when they sold it to the present owners. Thus, for 86 of its 113 years the building was owned by only two families. Because of the lack of firm evidence of its historic name, it is only fitting to identify the house by a combination of the two families by which it is still remembered in Irving Park--the Ropps and the Grabills.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Lakeside Directory of Chicago, 1874-1900

Brown, Eleanor. History of Irving Park.  
Typescript at the Hild Regional Branch,  
Chicago Public Library, c.1930.

Chicago Title & Trust Company records.

Lantern slides of old  
Irving Park, now in the  
possession of William  
Tyre, Chicago.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Chicago Loop, IL

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 439270 4645000  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary line encloses one rectangular city lot with the address  
4132 N. Keeler, Chicago.

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Paul Kruty

May, September, 1984

ORGANIZATION

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

7051 N. Oleander

TELEPHONE

312-774-0241

CITY OR TOWN

Chicago

STATE

Illinois

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL   

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. BOX 37127

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO:

**APR 26 1985**

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places beginning April 14, 1985 and ending April 20, 1985. For further information call (202) 343-9552.

STATE, County, Vicinity, Property, Address, (Date Listed)

ARKANSAS, Phillips County, Helena, Short, William A., House, 317 Biscoe St. (04/18/85)

ARKANSAS, Phillips County, Helena, Straub, William Nicholas, House, 531 Perry St. (04/18/85)

ARKANSAS, White County, Searcy, Hicks-Dugan-Deener House, 306 E. Center (04/18/85)

CONNECTICUT, Fairfield County, Bridgeport, Fairfield County Jail, 1106 N. Ave. (04/18/85)

GEORGIA, Barrow County, Winder, Jackson-Johns House, 116 Candler St. (04/18/85)

GEORGIA, Clarke County, Athens, Bloomfield Street Historic District, Roughly bounded by Bloomfield and Peabody Sts., U of G campus, Rutherford St. and Milledge Ave. (04/18/85)

GEORGIA, Clarke County, Athens, Boulevard Historic District, Roughly bounded by the Seaboard Coastline RR tracks, Pulaski St., Prince Ave., and Hiawasse St. (04/18/85)

GEORGIA, Clarke County, Athens, Milledge Avenue Historic District, Milledge Ave. from Broad St. to Five Points (04/18/85)

GEORGIA, Clarke County, Athens, Milledge Circle Historic District, Milledge Park, Lumpkin St., Milledge Circle and Milledge Ave. (04/18/85)

GEORGIA, Liberty County, Hinesville, Bacon-Fraser House, 208 E. Court St. (04/18/85)

GEORGIA, Lowndes County, Valdosta, Dasher High School, 900 S. Troup St. (04/18/85)

GEORGIA, McIntosh County, Ridgeville, Ridge, The, Old Shell Rd. GA 99 (04/18/85)

GEORGIA, Mitchell County, Camilla, Camilla Commercial Historic District, Roughly bounded by Broad, S. Scott and N. Scott Sts. (04/18/85)

GEORGIA, Thomas County, Thomasville, Fletcherville Historic District, Roughly bounded by Siexas, Wright, S. College and W. Jackson St. (04/18/85)

GEORGIA, Thomas County, Thomasville, Gordon Avenue Historic District, Gordon Ave. (04/18/85)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Ropp-Grabill House, 4132 N. Keeler Ave. (04/15/85)

IOWA, Harrison County, Logan, State Savings Bank, 312 E. 7th St. (04/18/85)

LOUISIANA, Jefferson Davis Parish, Jennings, Sunny Meade, 819 Cary Ave. (04/18/85)

MAINE, Hancock County, Brooklin vicinity, Flye Point - 2, (04/15/85)

MAINE, Lincoln County, Bristol, Pemaquid Point Light, Pemaquid Point (04/16/85)

MAINE, York County, York, Cape Neddick Light Station, Cape Neddick (04/16/85)

MICHIGAN, Calhoun County, Battle Creek, Kellogg, W. K., House, 256 W. Van Buren St. (04/18/85)

MICHIGAN, Lenawee County, Adrian, Adrian Union Hall-Croswell Opera House, (04/18/85)

MISSISSIPPI, Yalobusha County, Water Valley, Water Valley Post Office, 2322 Main St. (04/18/85)